342 On top they put sloping rafters which reach to the ground, and cover everything with palm leaves or reeds. One can see nothing inside except by the light of the fire or by the hole through which they enter, [356] which is 2 or 3 cubits high. The women clean the huts, and the boys clean the carbet and the space around it. During the day the men eat and talk in the carbet, and at night they retire to the small huts to sleep.

513 Their hammocks are nothing more than large pieces of woven 752 cotton which the women make on a sort of draper's loom, 3 or 4 ells [284] wide and 5 or 6 feet long. They leave little ribbons on the two ends, to which they attach stronger ribbons made of pita, and then attach these in turn to a larger cord also made of pita. They hang the beds by means of these cords in the middle of their huts to two forks and they sleep gently and comfortably. They make small and large ones. They carry the hammocks wherever they must spend the night. The French use them commonly. Since these hammocks are easily portable, they do not clutter up the houses, and they fold easily and are stowed away conveniently. Some are brought to us from the mainland (besides those we trade with the Caribs for); the English and [531] Portugese also make them. The Caribs paint theirs in Moresque patterns with a black that never fades. Those of the mainland savages are also painted similarly.

501 After talking of their lodgings and beds, a word must be said of the boats they use at sea. We call them pirogues, they name them kanaoa [canaoa]. These are made from large trees which they hollow out with fire, as well as with hatchets, and finish with adzes. They then shape the outside in the form proper for navigation. Because they are low, they build them up by attaching boards all around with liana, which serves them [637] as cord, and caulk them with folded mahot bark. They tie poles across to serve as benches while they row. They make these boats in all sizes. Those they call canaoa are what we call pirogues and are never less than 25 or 30 feet and go up to 50 or 60 feet. Others, which we call canoes and they kouliala, are of all sizes under 25 feet, some so small as to carry only one man for fishing. The canaoa are not pointed like those of the French, for they cut off the end and seal it with a board. They carry up to 40 and 50 persons with baggage. Big ones use two sails, and small ones a single sail. They row with small oars about like

484 a joupa or sheds, which they cover with leaves, and they sleep there. Most of them tie up their hammocks to a couple of trees and sleep without further ceremony. Unfortunately when they are in the woods [136] or along the seashore the mosquitos wake them up with their humming, and if this is not sufficient, they sting them so terribly that one must be an unfeeling fellow not to be bothered by them. [88]

286 352 The Caribs cut four big pieces of wood which are round and smooth. They lean and attach two of these to the purlins of the house. The other two are firmly bound crosswise over the first ones. One of these is above and the other is below, in proportion to the size of the hammock they wish to make. Around this frame women pass their cotton thread which they handle well, although they don't exert themselves too much. They leave half a foot unwoven at both extremities and divide this unwoven part into small groups of (looped) threads. They tie a thin cord, called ébenebou, at the first group of looped threads. This cord is extended (out from the threads) to the length of the arm and then is bent back and passed through the second bundle of looped threads (thereby forming a large loop). From the second bundle this same cord is extended outwards a similar distance and is bent back and passed through the third bundle of looped threads, and similar loops are made up to the last bundle of threads (where the ébenebou cord is tied). A thicker cord is passed through the tops of these large loops (which are thereby drawn together), and this is the cord by which they suspend the hammock wherever it will 513 be hung. This hammock is a protection against snakes, ants, and other dangerous pests. The Caribs make a fire underneath at night to protect themselves from mosquitos and cool air. I have seen some Frenchmen who put mattresses on these hammocks to sleep as in Europe, always in line with the long dimension. This is different from the Caribs who sleep across the shorter dimension (in line with the two suspended ends), and use half of the breadth as a covering. [192]

491 Among the Caribs a bridge is a plank of wood or a felled tree across a brook. They do not use anything to bridge the large rivers, and they either become wet or cross over them in a small canoe. [361]

396 The Caribs hollow out and make a small canoe from a tree called by the French Holland cheese, because the axe cuts it like cheese. These canoes are used either when they are grating manioc or to go to some neighboring place. It rots immediately if left on the ground, but when it is soaked in water it lasts a sufficiently long time if it is taken out and set to dry. [175]

344 this they fasten rafters which slope to the ground, and these are covered with reeds or latan [palm] leaves. The result is that it is very dark in the carbet. Light enters only through the door, which is so low that one cannot enter without stooping. The boys are in charge of cleaning and sweeping the inside of the carbet, as well as the grounds around it. The girls and young women perform the same duties in smaller houses. The carbet is oval shaped. In one side
[776] there is a small special opening through which the Carib contend the devils enter when summoned by their boye. The devils are the only ones who use this entryway.

513 The Caribs have no use for beds but always use cotton hammocks which they carry everywhere with them. Those who do not have cotton hammocks sleep on cabanes. These are made of four sticks
● 286 interlaced with cords of mahot bark. The wives sometimes spend a full year making a hammock. When they have spun seven or eight pounds of thick cotton thread which is smooth and well twisted, they arrange it on a loom as though they were making cloth. Then they weave the threads as our weavers do, except that the cloth is doubled and each end is left with a good foot of unwoven threads. The cloth is ten to twelve feet long and six feet wide.

To make the cloth into a hammock they take ten or twelve fathoms of aloes fiber cord, a bit thicker than our small cordage of the type called foit. Having bound together eight or ten of the loose threads at the end of the hammock, they fold this aloes cord into two-foot lengths, and then braid in eight or ten other loose threads. They make a fold in the fiber cord again and so forth until the end is reached. This being done they take another cord of aloes fiber as big as the finger, which is used to bind together all the folds of the first cord.

513 When they wish to sleep in it they tie the hammock with two big cords between large trees, or between two forks of the house supports. In tying, the hammocks are not taut but slack and bow-shaped. These hammocks are quite convenient and healthy because there is always fresh air. It is very pleasant to rest in one during the heat of the day in the cool shade under the trees. Almost all our Frenchmen use them, but chiefly those who are not married, for to sleep comfortably in a cotton hammock one should sleep alone.

513 When the hammocks are new they are as white as snow, but the
531 Caribs paint crude designs, in their fashion, with black paint which

5: Rouse E-4 (no date) 1948 ST13 Callinago ST13
(1650-1700)

if the vessel overturned. Large rectangular baskets, turned upside down and provided with wooden legs 4 to 5 inches (10 cm.) tall, served as tables (matoutou). The basketry technique was used also in the manufacture of strainers, sieves, and mats, the functions of which have been described above. In historic times the natives had brooms.

The weaving of cloth may not have been an original part of *Carib* culture. The women had wooden spindles for making thread and used belt looms for weaving it. They stretched the warp threads from a stick on one side of the house to a stick on the other; then two women wove in the weft, beating the threads down with a sword-shaped stick. The cloth was dyed with various colors, particularly red, and was sewn with a needle made from a palmetto spine.

Pottery and gourds.—The *Carib* baked pots and griddles of clay; the former were indispensable for making beer. They had numerous gourd containers, made by removing the pulp with hot water and pebbles. These included bottles for urucú, covered bowls (coyenbouc) for carrying trinkets, platters, cups, dippers, and spoons. Often they were engraved or painted. Coconut shells were treated in the same manner.

Woodworking.—The men not only carved canoes of wood but also they made bowls, which were used primarily for drinking bouts, and stools, which either were solid or were provided with four legs.

Fire making.—The people made fire by rubbing one mahot stick against another.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

Except in wartimes, each *Carib* village seems to have been an independent organization. It consisted of an extended family which had split away from some other village and was headed by its founder. This man, called a carbet chief or tiubutuli-hauthe, had charge of the carbet and of the entertainment which took place therein. He probably also supervised fishing and the cultivation of the land, which seems to have been communal. Although he was treated with deference, he had little authority. The *Carib* men were individualists, and they looked down upon the Europeans for taking orders.

Each island also had one or two war chiefs, called ubutu, who were elected to hold office for life. Except that ownership of a caracoli seems to have been one of the requirements for this chieftainship, no heredity was involved in the office. However, a son might succeed his father if he could prove himself worthy. He had to be an experienced warrior with a good record, excel in swimming and diving, show that he could carry a greater burden than his followers, and bear burning and slashing of his flesh without flinching.

The war chief was particularly honored. He was provided with an assistant, and wherever he went he was surrounded by a retinue. His

hammocks or smoking, crouched around their huts and appearing to meditate; they rarely speak and let their wives take care of all the work. Formerly they demanded absolute submission from them and did not permit them to take their meals with them. In the course of our trip, while we were passing in front of a Carib hut, we saw a young and strong man walking about calmly, surrounded by four children, the youngest of which was in his arms, while the women of the house busied themselves outside with the hardest work.

The Carib dwellings are rectangular huts more or less raised above the ground, with walls made of mixed straw of bamboo or some other wood and covered with palm leaves; sometimes they have over hangs as shelter against the sun. These huts differ little from what they were formerly, according to descriptions of them which the first observers left us, and at that time they called a group of huts a carbet(2),

2. This term has perpetuated itself in the French Antilles and in Martinique one still finds the village of Carbet and the peak of Carbet which dominates this settlement.

of which one was most important, in which an entire family lived. The house of the present Carib chief is of a more elaborate design, and the roof is of wood instead of thatch; inside it consists of four rooms, each containing a bed and chairs.

Personal property is usually simpler and consists of "hammocks, " a word of Carib origin used in most European languages. The hammocks are made by the women out of cotton cultivated near the hut; they are braided and not woven, and existed even at the time of the conquest. They were dyed red with roucou, and according to Father Labat, there were some larger than others, called marriage hammocks, braided by mothers for their daughters when they were married, but in which two people never slept together. The household utensils are gourds of different sizes, vases of baked earth and skullfully woven baskets. The Carib basket serves the natives as chest and cupboard; /138/ it is made with the greatest care of reeds painted in different colors, and is so well constructed that water cannot pass through, and the cover of the basket fits the bottom so well that the heaviest rains cannot dampen the contents. Its shape is that of a rectangular parallelepiped twice as long as it is wide. It is very light, and the

12: Taylor E-5 (ca. 1930-1937)1949
ST13 Callinago ST13

of the words black-listed by Breton as "point mots Sauvages," he himself gives what is probably the parent Carib form under "*coui à boire* couáikeu," phonetically [ˈkwɛkɛ̃].

Rouse omits to mention two important classes of kitchen utensils: the mortar (ánna), and the manioc trough (batáia), both carved out of single pieces of wood, the latter being just as important to the manioc complex as the stone-chip grater (eše), the basketry squeezer (rukúma) and sifter (híbiše), and the cassava-plate or griddle (butáli).

"Corn, sweetpotatoes, yams, beans, and peppers also were cultivated, the corn being made into bread as among the *Arawak*." Rouse elsewhere mentions corn beer.[28] Corn is and apparently always was of very secondary importance to the Carib, and it seems doubtful whether the Carib ever made much use of bread or beer made from it. Breton has this to say about it:

> After it has grown, that is to say two months after it has been sown, the Savages gather and roast it on the coals, then eat it. The Galibi make from it a fermented drink which is not inferior to beer. The French use it to feed poultry, while some turn it into flour, which they mix with an equal quantity of wheat flour, and make with this a fine bread which tastes quite good.[29]

Breton elsewhere describes at length the making of cassava-beer (uéku), and speaks of a beverage of boiled cassavas in connection with the couvade. On the other hand, the only use made of corn by the modern Dominica Carib is that described in the first sentence of the above quotation from Breton. Botanists usually describe yams (*Dioscorea* spp.) as of Old World origin, but it now seems certain that a species of *Dioscorea trifida,* known to the Carib as kúšu, and formerly much employed by them, was American. Two other food plants, not listed by Rouse but fairly important to the Carib of Breton's day and at the present time, are *Xanthosoma* spp. (uáho) and pumpkin (uauáiama). By "guayba," Rouse presumably means *guava,* Carib: kuiábu.

We are told that hammocks were "made of a network of cotton thread," and that "the weaving of cloth may not have been an original part of Carib culture. The women had wooden spindles for making thread and used belt looms for weaving it. They stretched the warp threads from a stick on one side of the house to a stick on the other; then two women wove in the weft, beating the threads down with a sword shaped stick."[30] Breton, on the other hand, describes the

28 *Handbook,* pp. 551-557.
29 Breton, *op. cit.,* p. 355.
30 *Handbook,* pp. 552, 555.

12: Taylor E-5 (ca. 1930-1937)1949
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weaving of hammocks on a heavy frame, similar to that employed in Guiana today, and which leaned against the wall of the house. He says:

> The Savages cut four big, round, smooth pieces of wood; two of which they lean and secure against the house-runners, while the two others are bound tightly across them, one above and one below, in proportion to the size of the bed, and around which the women arrange their cotton thread, which they handle skillfully, but without hurrying themselves over it. They leave half a foot unwoven at both extremities, and this they divide into little bundles, through which they attach a little cord called ebenebu, then bend it back at arm's length and pass it through another bundle, bend it again, and so on to the last bundle. Then they pass a stouter cord through the upper bends of the smaller cord, and this is the one by which they hang it wherever they may be to protect themselves from snakes and ants and other harmful beasts.[31]

Labat describes Carib hammocks seen some fifty years later as "une pièce de grosse toile de coton"; and goes on to say how, once the warp was set up, the women were

> obliged to pass their ball of thread under and over the warp threads, one after another, and to beat the weft down with a sort of knife made of heavy hard wood so as to make all the threads get into their places and render the work even.

From the above it would appear that heddles were not in general use; but la Borde speaks of a "roller" at the bottom of the frame, which the women turned as the weaving progressed, and states explicitly that the ends of the warp threads were left unwoven, and were not cut on completion of the hammock. From the above descriptions, as well as from modern Guiana practice, it is evident that this referred, *not* to a cloth-beam, but to a head-stick, which must have been employed, as otherwise the hammock would have had to be cut on completion, and there would have been no bundles of loops through which to pass the "little cord."

"The paint, urucú (roucou), was made by mixing oil with boiled and ground seeds from the bixa plant."[32] *Bixa orellana* L., Carib: kuséue, in the men's, and: bíše, in the women's speech, is a small tree. The dye is obtained from the waxy red aril surrounding each of the seeds, which are clustered in a sort of pod. After boiling, according to Breton, the water was allowed to cool and the seeds rubbed between the hands to remove this aril, which then settled at the bottom of the water in the form of a waxlike cake. The prepared paint, known as šurúkuli or

31 Breton, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-193.
32 *Handbook*, p. 552.

13: Hodge & Taylor N, E-5 (1930-1956) 1957
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wound around the left wrist and forefinger. The spindle was set rotating by rolling its lower end (below the whorl) sharply down the thigh with the right hand. The thread thus spun was rolled onto the spindle-shank (above the guard) and the process recommenced. Cotton thread thus spun was used for weaving hammocks [39], head and leg bands [40], and more recently for mending clothes. Today cotton fiber is used principally for stuffing pillows and mattresses, and for calking canoes. However, a ritual bath, given to the mother after childbirth, utilized coton noir; it is discussed under *Ocimum micranthum*.

Specimen citation: 114 (T), 115 (T), 2541.

Hibiscus esculentus Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 696. 1753.
Abelmoschus esculentus Moench, Meth. 617. 1794.

Okra. — Gombo. — *inéku* (see also *Lonchocarpus* spp.).

A native of the Old World tropics, this species is widely cultivated. It was first recorded from the West Indies in 1750 (21), and is a familiar garden vegetable in Dominica.

Okra is either eaten as a vegetable or is used as an ingredient in a local soup known as « calalou ». However, a Carib hunter must not put any gombo in the pot with the game he cooks or his dogs and gun would lose their power of taking any more game of that sort. The leaves are used as shampoo in washing the hair to promote growth. A superstition also exists that eaten gombo tops will cause one to meet the persons who have been speaking ill of one.

Specimen citation: 136 (T).

Hibiscus tiliaceus Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 694. 1753.
Hibiscus elatus Swartz, Prodr. 102. 1788.
Pariti tiliaceum St. Hilaire, Fl. Bras. Merid. 1: 256. 1827.

Mahoe. — Maho (also spelled mahot, or mahaut) Doux. — *uainiu*, *uáiu*.

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[39] It is thought that the Island Caribs first introduced the cotton hammock into the Lesser Antilles from continental South America.

[40] Such articles were all listed by CHANCA (69) in his famous letter, and it is interesting to note that certain of these are still woven by the Caribs of Guiana.